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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 28, 2008

A QUICK LOOK AT THE TURKISH PRESS
December 1, 2008

In Today's Papers

Thousands Protest AKP Policies in Ankara
Media outlets report that over the weekend, more than 50,000 demonstrators in Ankara protested the AKP's handling of the global financial crisis in Turkey. The rally, held in Ankara on Saturday, was organized by Turkey's leading labor unions KESK and DISK, and several NGOs and political parties. Clashes erupted between the demonstrators and riot police with the police using tear gas and batons, and demonstrators throwing stones. Scores of demonstrators and six policemen were hurt and nearby shops were damaged. The rally protested rising unemployment, price increases in natural gas and electricity, and the ruling AKP policies that protect the wealthy at the expense of laborers, papers report.
Editorial Commentary on Erdogan-Domestic Politics
Ismail Kucukkaya in tabloid Aksam: "If PM Erdogan had continued his policy of conflict with the military, those who criticize him now would continue praising him. TGS chief General Basbug and Erdogan place a high priority on the fight against terror. Some simply can't stand this. They want to attribute a negative image to Erdogan, and push him into his old orbit. It's true that Erdogan has made many mistakes. The economy is in critical condition. We must not allow disputes on the basic principles of the republic, such as secularism. We have already lost too much time on abstract matters, and our problems continue to grow. Today, Erdogan's basic political line is correct, and southeast policies form the backbone of this line. Erdogan must not be sacrificed, the new way he's experiencing could provide a way out for Turkey."

Erdogan: Global Crisis Will Have Limited Effect on Turkey
Media outlets report Prime Minister Erdogan, in a televised address to the nation on Sunday, said the global economic crisis has begun to subside and that the crisis would have a limited effect on Turkey. The PM did not announce a package of economic measures to deal with the crisis, but said his government had introduced various tax incentives to attract funds to Turkey, and had offered

zero-interest loans totaling 350 trillion YTL to small and medium-size enterprises. Business daily Referans says economic indicators show the measures taken by the government have not produced results, and warns about a possible drastic decline in domestic consumer demand on the eve of the forthcoming Feast of Sacrifice and New Year holidays. The paper also criticizes the government for delaying a critical deal with the IMF. "Erdogan Still Underestimates the Crisis," says leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet in a front page headline. Liberal Radikal, too, finds Erdogan's approach "too optimistic."

Editorial Commentary on Global Economic Crisis-Turkey

Erdal Saglam wrote in mainstream Hurriyet: "At his party group meeting in Kizilcahamam last weekend, PM Erdogan said 'The source of the economic crisis is not Turkey, but the US and Europe. Therefore, no one can blame the AKP government for the crisis.' This interpretation of the crisis ignores the efforts taken by 38 countries to halt the crisis. We cannot expect much from this AKP government. When the AKP government was asked to make an agreement with the IMF in May, the government just pushed aside the suggestion and insisted, 'This crisis will not hit Turkey.' After such comments and a refusal to take precautions, the government is saying 'no one can blame the AKP government!' Thus, Turkey is affected by the economic crisis because of bad governance."

Suleyman Yasar wrote in a column entitled, "Is the Government Late?" in leftist Taraf: "In dynamics of internal 2001, Kemal Dervis cited two reasons for Turkey's economic crisis that year. First, he noted the debt and he noted the problems with the unhealthy structure of the public banking system. Because of this, a crisis of confidence

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emerged in Turkish markets which lead to the 2001 financial crisis. Now, due to the global financial crisis, foreign investment in Turkey is beginning to be affected. When the current global crisis began to hit, our government leaders insisted that Turkey had already taken steps to strengthen our economy and Turkey would not be affected by the crisis. The AKP government's crisis lobby accused foreign investors of being irresponsible and criticized them for losing money. But still the government did not take any measures to cope with the crisis. Yes, the government is late. Only now is the government planning to implement measures that are parallel to what the Federal Reserve did to address the crisis in the U.S. As the IMF opens their pockets to address the effects of the financial crisis in Turkey, our government leaders are working to deepen the effects of the financial crisis on Turkey by creating tensions and criticizing those - like the IMF - who are helping Turkey take steps to curb the effects of the global crisis. The government's criticism of the IMF could very well affect trust in Turkey's markets and trust in the government's approach to economic policy."

Metropoll Survey on Local and General Elections

Mainstream Vatan reports that according to a public survey carried out by Metropoll Research Company, which is known for its ties to the AKP, support for the AKP decreased both in a possible general election and for upcoming local elections in March. The survey was conducted in 30 provinces, among 1248 people in November 24-26. According to the poll, in a possible general election AKP's votes were 32.6 percent, CHP's 12.5, MHP's 7.6 and DTP's 3 percent. For upcoming local elections AKP's votes were 28.5 percent, CHP's 12.7, MHP's 7.2 and DTP's 0.8 percent. A total of 26.7 percent of participants said they had no idea for whom they would vote.

The "Baby-Faced Butcher" Reveals Mumbai Attackers Sought 5000 Deaths (Hurriyet)

In the aftermath of the bloody terrorist attacks last week in Mumbai, media outlets note the frightening confessions of the one terrorist to be captured alive. In addition, media pay attention to the ensuing tensions between India and Pakistan, while PM Erdogan actively pursued 'telephone diplomacy' in order to call the reduction of tensions in the fragile relationship between the two nuclear-armed democracies. Mainstream Sabah reports in "The Butcher of Mumbai," that captured terrorist Azam Amir Kasab, whose last name means "butcher" in Turkish, told Indian officials "our target was to kill 5000 people." Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak reports, "The only

terrorist to be captured alive after India's September 11th-like attacks made a terrifying confession when he said their target was to kill 5000 people." Mainstream Hurriyet calls Kasab, "the baby-faced butcher." Liberal Radikal carries the headline, "The Example of India's Bad Temper," and reports, "India is blaming Pakistan for the terrorist attacks in Mumbai," while, "protestors take to the streets to protest the government's failure to prevent the blood-letting." In "The 'Moral' Resignations in India," mainstream Milliyet reports, "The Interior Minister and the National Security Advisor have resigned due to their 'moral responsibility' for the attacks in Mumbai. CNN Turk reports this morning, "At a time when relations were improving between India and Pakistan, the deadly terrorist attacks in Mumbai threaten the fragile relationship between the two nations." Leftist Taraf reports, "The Indian Government is Furious," with Pakistan and Indian government officials want to "reevaluate the process of peace and dialogue" with Pakistan.

Meanwhile, media also note that Turkish PM Erdogan spoke with leaders in order to contribute to peace in the region. In "Erdogan Sought Peace and Spoke With Five Leaders," mainstream Vatan reports, "Erdogan phoned world leaders in order to ease tensions between India and Pakistan." According to the article, Erdogan spoke with UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon, Israeli PM Olmert, British PM Brown, Pakistani PM Gilani, and Indian PM Singh. Mainstream Milliyet calls Erdogan's approach "telephone diplomacy." Mainstream Sabah

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reports Erdogan "initiated his mediation efforts after the Pakistani PM requested his help" because Pakistan "is being held responsible by India for the attacks." Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak reports, "Erdogan told UNSG Ban Ki Moon that the UN could step in and diffuse tensions."

Ambassador Jeffrey Arrives in Turkey

In "Ambassador Jeffrey: I'm Happy to be in Turkey," mainstream Milliyet reports the newly-appointed U.S. Ambassador to Turkey James Jeffrey spoke to journalists in Turkish as he arrived at the airport in Ankara. Mainstream Sabah notes the new U.S. Ambassador "is a diplomat with a military background." Islamist-oriented Zaman reports Jeffrey is "a diplomat who knows Turkey very well."

El Pais: Guantanamo Prisoners Transported Through Turkey

Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak reports in "Guantanamo Clearance through Incirlik," that Spain's El Pais newspaper published secret documents indicating "Guantanamo prisoners were transported through Turkey under the guise of 'an emergency situation.'" Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet carries the headline, "Ankara Also Knew," and reports, "El Pais contends that officials from Spain, Portugal, Italy and Turkey knew about prison transfers to Guantanamo via their countries."

Editorial Commentary on Turkey-Iraq

Semih Idiz wrote in mainstream Milliyet: "Following the SOFA agreement between Iraq and the US, allegations have increased regarding Turkey's need for Iraq's permission to conduct cross border operations. However, if these operations are necessary because of Iraq's weakness and inability to control its own territory, then Turkey should not need Iraq's permission. Moreover, article 51 of the UN Charter gives a country the right to defend itself against external attacks. Unfortunately, this article has a drawback from Turkey's angle because if the operations are launched based on this article, then, Turkey should inform the UN Security Council immediately and then both countries would have to abide with the UN decisions. In short, the Turkish military will have the right to launch CBOs against the PKK until Iraq says "CBOs are unnecessary because the region is fully under Iraqi control", and of course then, Iraq will need to prove this.

TV News:
CNN Turk

Domestic News

- The Prime Ministry Ethics Board has initiated an investigation

into corruption and fraud claims against Zahid Akman, the head of the Turkish media watchdog RTUK.

- The ruling AKP will name its candidates for the municipal elections by January 15.

- The Turkish Parliament will celebrate on "World Human Rights Day" December 4.

International News

- The head of Iran's atomic energy agency, Gholam Reza Aghazadeh, proposes building nuclear power plants jointly with neighboring Arab countries.

- Four Turkmen are killed in attacks in northern Iraq over the last two days.

- Hamas blocks scores of Muslim pilgrims from leaving the Gaza Strip for the annual hajj pilgrimage.

SILLIMAN